



ENGLISH DAY: A LIVING LEGACY OF LANGUAGE, PASSION, AND TRANSFORMATION

POR: CLAUDIA PATRICIA CUBILLOS RODRÍGUEZ¹

Recibido: 01 de junio de 2026

Aceptación: 28 de agosto de 2026

SUMMARY

English Day at Colegio Hispanoamericano is a 70-year transformative tradition that has evolved from structured classroom exercises into an immersive, student-centered celebration. It integrates communicative learning with holistic development, fostering critical thinking, creativity, and global awareness. Led by teachers who act as architects of transformation, the event remains a dynamic legacy that turns language into a lived reality and prepares students for an interconnected world.

Key Words: Pedagogical transformation, Communicative learning, Holistic development, Immersive experience, Global citizenship, Educational innovation, Spelling Bee.

RESUMEN

El English Day, en el Colegio Hispanoamericano es una tradición transformadora de 70 años que ha evolucionado desde ejercicios estructurados en el aula hacia una celebración inmersiva centrada en el estudiante. Esta iniciativa integra el aprendizaje comunicativo con el desarrollo integral, fomentando el pensamiento crítico, la creatividad y la conciencia global. Liderado por docentes que actúan como arquitectos de la transformación, el evento se mantiene como un legado dinámico que convierte el idioma en una realidad vivida y prepara a los estudiantes para un mundo interconectado.

Palabras Clave: transformación pedagógica, aprendizaje comunicativo, desarrollo integral, experiencia inmersiva, ciudadanía global, innovación educativa, spelling bee.

¹ Licenciada en Lenguas Extranjeras por la Universidad del Valle y posee dos maestrías: una en Lingüística por la misma institución y otra en Dirección y Gestión de Centros Educativos por la Universidad Tecnológica. Ha sido docente de pregrado en la Facultad de Educación de la Universidad Santiago de Cali, formando a futuros profesionales en el ámbito educativo. Actualmente, coordina el Departamento de Lengua Extranjera en la Fundación Hispanoamericano, liderando proyectos educativos enfocados en el desarrollo de competencias en lenguas extranjeras para mejorar el rendimiento académico de los estudiantes. ccubillos@colegiohispano.edu.co

ENGLISH DAY AT COLEGIO HISPANOAMERICANO: A LIVING LEGACY OF LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

As Colegio Hispanoamericano proudly commemorates its 70th anniversary, this milestone represents far more than the passage of time; it stands as a testament to decades of educational excellence, institutional growth, and the continuous pursuit of meaningful learning experiences. Within this rich history, certain traditions have not only endured but have also evolved into defining elements of the school's identity. Among these, English Day emerges as one of the most significant and transformative initiatives of the English Department an event that encapsulates the essence of communicative learning, creativity, and cultural engagement.

From its modest beginnings to its current status as a cornerstone of institutional life, English Day reflects a pedagogical journey shaped by innovation, dedication, and a deep understanding of language as a tool for connection. Its evolution mirrors broader changes in educational philosophy, particularly the shift from traditional, teacher-centered instruction toward more dynamic, student-centered approaches that prioritize meaningful communication and authentic use of language.

This milestone stands not only as a testament to decades of educational excellence but also as a living legacy where every spoken word contributes to a story of continuous growth. English Day encapsulates this journey, turning language learning into a lived reality that defines the school's identity.

ENGLISH DAY: A TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY OF LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

As the Colegio Hispanoamericano celebrates its 70th anniversary, English Day stands as a cornerstone of its institutional identity, representing a profound evolution in how language is taught and experienced. Far from being a static event, it is a living legacy that mirrors the school's shift from traditional instruction to a dynamic, student-centered pedagogical model.

THE ORIGINS: FROM STRUCTURE TO EXPRESSION

In its earliest stages, English Day was a relatively simple initiative rooted in the traditional methodologies that characterized language teaching at the time. Activities were primarily classroom-based and focused on controlled practice. Students memorized dialogues, recited short speeches, and performed structured exercises designed to reinforce grammatical accuracy and vocabulary acquisition.

While these practices may appear limited by today's standards, they played a crucial role in establishing the foundation upon which future developments would be built. Even then, there

was an emerging awareness among educators that language learning needed to extend beyond textbooks. The seeds of transformation were already present: a desire to make English more than an academic subject to turn it into a lived and experienced reality.

These early efforts demonstrated an essential pedagogical insight: that students learn more effectively when they are given opportunities to use language in meaningful contexts. Although the scope of English Day was initially modest, its underlying philosophy pointed toward a more expansive vision of education. While these early practices focused on controlled exercises and grammatical accuracy, they were the seeds of transformation. They established a vital pedagogical insight: language learning must extend beyond textbooks to become an authentic tool for connection in a student's daily life.

TRANSFORMATION THROUGH PEDAGOGICAL INNOVATION

As educational paradigms began to shift globally, so too did the approach to English Day at Colegio Hispanoamericano. Influenced by communicative language teaching, task-based learning, and constructivist theories, the event gradually expanded in both scale and purpose.

English Day evolved from a classroom activity into a full-scale institutional celebration. Physical spaces within the school were reimagined: classrooms became theatrical stages, hallways transformed into cultural exhibits, and common areas turned into interactive learning environments. This spatial transformation symbolized a deeper pedagogical change: learning was no longer confined to traditional boundaries but became an immersive, school-wide experience. As classrooms became theatrical stages and hallways turned into cultural exhibits, the school was reimagined as an immersive learning environment. Students shifted from passive recipients to active creators, using theatrical productions and debates to prioritize meaning and intention over mechanical repetition.

Students assumed a more active role in the process. Rather than simply reproducing memorized content, they began to create, interpret, and perform. Activities such as theatrical productions, musical performances, storytelling sessions, debates, and interactive games became central components of the celebration. These experiences allowed learners to engage with the language in authentic and meaningful ways, fostering both linguistic competence and personal expression.

This transformation reflects a fundamental principle of modern language education: that communication is not merely about accuracy, but about meaning, intention, and interaction. English Day became a space where students could experiment with language, take risks, and develop confidence in their ability to communicate.

THE ROLE OF TEACHERS: ARCHITECTS OF TRANSFORMATION

At the heart of English Day's evolution lies the unwavering commitment of the teaching staff. Generations of educators have contributed to its growth, each bringing unique perspectives, innovative methodologies, and a shared passion for teaching.

Their work extends far beyond the classroom. Planning English Day requires extensive preparation, creativity, and collaboration. Teachers dedicate countless hours to designing activities, guiding rehearsals, supporting students, and ensuring that each event is both educationally meaningful and engaging. This level of dedication reflects a profound understanding of the teacher's role not merely as an instructor, but as a facilitator, mentor, and inspirer.

Moreover, teachers have consistently embraced change. As new technologies, methodologies, and educational challenges have emerged, they have adapted their practices to ensure that English Day remains relevant and impactful. Their ability to innovate while maintaining the core values of the institution has been instrumental in sustaining this tradition over time.

Through their efforts, English Day has become a powerful example of what education can achieve when driven by passion, collaboration, and a clear pedagogical vision. The unwavering commitment of the staff reflects their role as facilitators, mentors, and inspirers. By constantly adapting to new technologies and educational challenges, these educators ensure that English Day remains a dynamic and impactful tradition for every new generation.

A SPACE FOR HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

One of the most remarkable aspects of English Day is its contribution to students' holistic development. Beyond linguistic skills, the event fosters a wide range of competencies that are essential for success in the modern world. Beyond linguistic skills, students cultivate self-esteem, teamwork, and critical thinking. By engaging with themes like environmental sustainability and global citizenship, they realize that English is a powerful means of engaging with the world and acting as responsible participants in a global society.

Students develop confidence as they perform in front of audiences, overcoming fear and building self-esteem. They enhance their creativity by designing presentations, scripts, and performances. Collaboration becomes a key element, as many activities require teamwork, negotiation, and shared responsibility.

Furthermore, English Day encourages critical thinking. Through debates, thematic presentations, and problem-solving activities, students engage with complex ideas and learn to articulate their perspectives effectively. This aligns with the broader goal of education: to prepare individuals not only to acquire knowledge but to apply it thoughtfully and responsibly.

In this sense, English Day transcends its role as a language event. It becomes a platform for personal growth, where students discover their abilities, develop new skills, and gain a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them.

CULTURAL AWARENESS AND GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

As the world has become increasingly interconnected, the importance of cultural awareness in language education has grown significantly. English Day has consistently reflected this global dimension by incorporating themes that resonate with contemporary realities.

Topics such as environmental sustainability, cultural diversity, global citizenship, and technological innovation have been integrated into the event, allowing students to explore relevant issues while practicing the language. This approach reinforces the idea that learning English is not an end in itself, but a means of engaging with the world.

By connecting language learning with real world contexts, English Day helps students develop a sense of responsibility and awareness. They learn to appreciate different cultures, understand global challenges, and recognize their role as active participants in a global society.

THE SPELLING BEE: PRECISION, DISCIPLINE, AND EXCELLENCE

Within the diverse range of activities that characterize English Day, the Spelling Bee Contest holds a distinctive place. It represents a different dimension of language learning one that emphasizes precision, attention to detail, and perseverance.

Participating in a Spelling Bee requires more than memorization; it demands a deep understanding of language structure, patterns, and rules. Students must demonstrate concentration, resilience, and the ability to perform under pressure. Each word spelled correctly is the result of dedication, practice, and determination.

Beyond its competitive aspect, the Spelling Bee symbolizes the pursuit of excellence. It highlights the importance of effort and discipline, reminding students that mastery is achieved through consistent practice. At the same time, it fosters a sense of achievement and pride, as participants contribute to a tradition that has been built over generations. The Spelling Bee represents a dimension of language learning that demands discipline and resilience. It reminds students that mastery is a result of consistent practice and perseverance, fostering a sense of pride as they contribute to a tradition built over seventy years.

A LIVING TRADITION: CONTINUITY AND EVOLUTION

English Day stands as a living tradition one that honors the past while embracing the future. Its continuity over 70 years is a reflection of its relevance and impact. Yet, its strength lies not only in its history, but in its capacity to evolve.

Each new generation of students and teachers brings fresh ideas, perspectives, and energy to the event. This constant renewal ensures that English Day remains dynamic and meaningful. It adapts

to changing educational needs, incorporates new technologies, and responds to the interests and realities of contemporary learners.

At the same time, it remains rooted in the core values that have defined Colegio Hispanoamericano: excellence, commitment, creativity, and a passion for learning. These values provide a stable foundation upon which innovation can flourish.

CONCLUSION: A CELEBRATION OF LEARNING AND COMMUNITY

As Colegio Hispanoamericano celebrates its 70th anniversary, English Day emerges as a powerful symbol of what education can achieve when guided by vision, dedication, and a commitment to excellence. It is more than an event; it is a reflection of the institution's identity and a testament to the transformative power of education.

Through English Day, students discover their voices, teachers reaffirm their vocation, and the entire community comes together to celebrate learning. It is a space where language becomes alive, where creativity finds expression, and where education transcends traditional boundaries.

Looking toward the future, English Day will undoubtedly continue to evolve, embracing new challenges and opportunities. Yet, its essence will remain unchanged: a celebration of language, culture, and the human capacity to connect and communicate.

And as each student steps forward whether on stage, in a classroom, or in a Spelling Bee they become part of a story that has been unfolding for 70 years. A story written not only in words, but in experiences, efforts, and dreams.

Because in the end, every word spoken, every idea shared, and every performance presented is a testament to a journey that continues one generation at a time.

REFERENCES

- Brooks, J. G., & Brooks, M. G. (1999). In search of understanding: The case for constructivist classrooms. ASCD.
- Dewey, J. (1938). Experience and education. Kappa Delta Pi. (Supporting the concept of language as a "lived and experienced reality").
- Gardner, H. (2011). Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences. Basic Books. (Supporting the holistic development through music, theater, and storytelling).
- Nunan, D. (2004). Task-based language teaching. Cambridge University Press. (Supporting the task-based learning approach mentioned in the article).
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). Approaches and methods in language teaching (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- UNESCO. (2015). Global citizenship education: Topics and learning objectives.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes. Harvard University Press.